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Rewald firm owes her money, Playboy's Miss April claims

By Walter Wright
Advertiser Staff Writer

Playboy magazine's Miss April says she lost money investing with Ronald Rewald, and she wants \$16,500 back.

Cynthia Michelle Brooks, 33, a former Honolulu model, said she met Rewald in 1981 at his Honolulu Polo Club. An accomplished equestrian rider, Brooks expanded polo ponies at the club, riding them along the beach.

Rewald, who suggested she invest her money with him, she said.

"I didn't invest into his company until after I had known him for a good year. I really thought we were friends," she said. "I had no idea, it certainly took me by surprise" when the company collapsed in 1983.

She said in a telephone interview from her Los Angeles home she is "rather skeptical about recovering anything. I'm considering it gone."

The Rewald case may lead the Playmate of the Month to a date in court here. She may be called to testify against Rewald when he goes on trial for fraud in August.

The story accompanying 19 photographs of Brooks in the April Playboy makes no mention of her investment with Rewald.

In a pool of claim filed with the U.S. Bankruptcy Court here in 1983, Brooks said \$16,500 is the amount the defunct firm of Bishop Baldwin Rewald Dillingham & Wong owed her. That included attorneys' fees and the 20 percent-plus interest she was promised.

But records of bankruptcy trustee Reynaldo Grautly, on file in the same case, indicate she has only \$2,546 coming. That's partly because her investment account balance doesn't show \$10,000 paid out to her directly by Rewald and his firm.

Brooks said in an interview that because she had put all her money into Bishop Baldwin, "naturally, the CIA made



Cynthia Michelle Brooks
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going to give me some back when I ask for it, right? That's all that was."

The Bishop Baldwin transactions were "very involved," but "I know exactly what happened. I've been working on this ever since the company went under," she said.

Negotiations between bankruptcy officials and Brooks' attorney, are expected to resolve the matter.

"I'm sorry I ever went into it, I'm sorry I ever met the man," Brooks said. "There are so many good things happening to me now, that's what I want to concentrate on."

Rewald, contacted yesterday at his home in Los Angeles, said he was under instructions from his attorney not to talk to reporters.

Rewald is accused of spending millions of dollars of investors' money on himself, his friends and his fancy lifestyle. Brooks says the CIA made

him spend the money to protect a spy network operating out of his company offices here. The CIA agrees it used the company as cover for "several" personnel, but denies running the company or taking investors' money.

The firm closed in August 1983 when Rewald attempted suicide in the face of a television news report raising questions about his operations.

Brooks and her then-husband, an Army pilot, invested \$7,000 in the first six months of 1982, in return for promises of 20 percent-plus interest. Their initial \$5,000 deposit went into Rewald's personal account, even though it was credited to Brooks' investment account balance, records indicate.

Then, in August 1982, according to bankruptcy court records, Rewald wrote Brooks a check from his personal account for \$3,000. Two days later, a company check for \$5,000 was issued to Brooks, the records indicate.

Neither of these checks was deducted from the balance in

the investment account, company records indicate.

In February 1983, the company issued Brooks an additional check for \$2,000. This amount, too, was not deducted from Brooks' own investment account balance, company records indicate.

Brooks and her husband, who had been married for nine years, were divorced in 1983. In the divorce, Brooks got title to the Bishop Baldwin account, which she estimated was worth \$49,000 at the time, counting additional deposits she made.

Brooks left Hawaii in 1983 and later moved to the Los Angeles area, where she worked as a Bunny in the Playboy Club. She is now employed by Playboy's "Playmate Promotions," and travels around the country making personal appearances.

Playboy didn't mention Brooks' financial mishap in Hawaii but quotes her as saying she now is "taking care of my own investments and trying to really understand IRAs and money markets."

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